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Via ECFS
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

USTelecom's petition hinges on the purported fact that telecom markets are now competitive.

Key evidence provided is the presence of cable competitors in many/most markets.

In my opinion this argument is disingenuous: While the presence of a single competitor in many markets is indisputable, one needs merely to look at the similarity in anti-consumer pricing practices (deceptive pricing, locked-in contracts, bundle pricing with automatic price increases) shared between the so-called "competitors" to understand that there is some form of tacit (if not explicit) collusion between these parties.

In addition to this, many cable "competitors" benefited from historical regulatory advantages, just as ILECs did. A cynical interpretation would say that these competitors have a vested interest in protecting each other.

In my market in the San Francisco Bay Area, a competitor (sonic.com) is entering competition and offering services at less than half the cost of incumbent carriers.

How is this possible when the incumbents should have the benefits of scale, a long history of streamlining operations, and established consumer relationships? Simple, the incumbents are still reaping the benefits of their once-monopolistic position - doing everything they can (including engaging in cartel-like behavior) to hold on to their margin.

As a consumer of telecom services, I urge you to please reject the forbearance petition - it is anything but consumer-friendly. Allow more time before reviewing the Telecom Act of 1996 - the time will come when it is no longer necessary, but that time is not now.

Ulrich Wiedmann